



2017 Water Vole survey results

During the 2017 surveying season a total of 400 x 500m survey stretches were surveyed by BBOWT staff and volunteers. This represents over 200km of waterways within the three counties! A breakdown of the surveys completed is in the table below (Colours denote watercourses in the same catchments).

Watercourse	Surveys		
	Positive	Negative	Total
Berkshire			
River Dun	13	5	18
Holy Brook	0	8	8
River Kennet	4	8	12
Kennet & Avon Canal	9	38	47
River Pang	0	4	4
Buckinghamshire			
Great Ouse	9	6	15
Chichley Brook	0	7	7
River Chess	24	15	39
Grand Union Canal	0	14	14
Oxfordshire			
River Ock	0	2	2
Childrey Brook	7	12	19
Cow Common Ditch	0	13	13
Frogmore Brook	7	3	10
Letcombe Brook	17	9	26
Portobello Ditch	0	9	9

Watercourse	Surveys		
	Positive	Negative	Total
Oxfordshire			
Sandford Brook	2	0	2
Stutfield Brook	6	1	7
Woodhill Brook	1	5	6
Kingstone Brook	4	1	5
Tuckmill Brook	8	1	9
Upper Thames	10	42	52
Wilts and Berks Canal	4	9	13
Bradfords Brook	2	0	2
River Evenlode	0	6	6
River Leach	5	5	10
Littlemore Brook	0	5	5
Northfield Brook	0	5	5
Oxford Canal	5	12	17
Radley Brook	1	2	3
River Thames at Oxford	2	13	15
Total	140	260	400

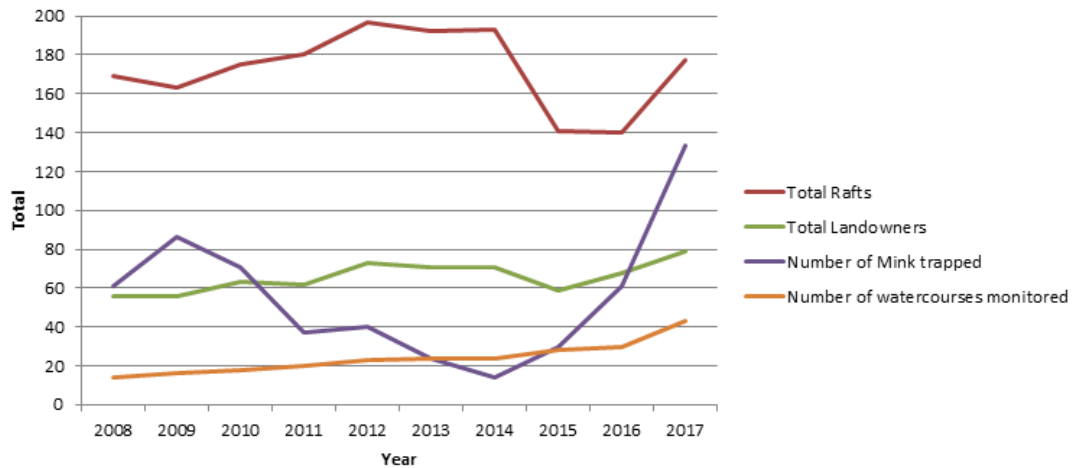
The 2017 survey results were largely positive with vole activity being found across most of the surveyed Local Key Areas (LKAs). Sadly no evidence of water voles was found on the River Pang, Cow Common Brook, Portobello Ditch, Holy Brook or Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal this year. New populations were however recorded on the Stutfield Brook, Frogmore Brook, Bradford Brook and the River Leach.

Vole populations on the Kennet and Avon Canal and Oxford Canal appeared stable whilst declines were seen on the upper River Thames and the Thames through Oxford. Overall the coverage of Local Key Areas increased by 3.9% in 2017, from 580km² to 603km². We will continue to work this year to help keep our water vole populations viable and facilitate their spread into new areas. **You can read the full suite of reports from the 2017 season at:**

Thank you to all our volunteer surveyors who play such a vital role in helping us to monitor the progress of our local water vole populations and to all landowners who gave us permission to survey through their land.

Mink control update

Last seasons (July 2016-June 2017) results are now complete and it appears to have been a bumper year for mink across the 3 counties. A total of 136 mink are known to have been caught during that period which is over double the total for the previous year (61). The graph below shows mink control information for the last 10 years.



Many of our Local Key Areas are still under protected and we are always seeking new locations for rafts and new volunteers to get involved. **If you are interested in getting involved or know someone who you think might be please put them in touch with us.** Our mink monitoring information can be found here: <https://goo.gl/BCpSxF>

Water vole habitat help

We have been working hard to improve water vole habitat on the lower River Misbourne over the past year. Supported by the Environment Agency, Buckinghamshire County Council and Groundwork, we have undertaken substantial works to protect the river banks, improve flow in-channel, reinstate backwaters and remove excess tree cover.

We have also been working with a landowner as part of the Upper Thames Farmers' Conservation Group to undertake habitat improvements on the Wadley Stream. Volunteers from BBOWT's Chimney Meadows nature reserve braved the cold to do 3 days of scrub clearance for the benefit of water voles.

Badger vaccination update

During 2017 BBOWT, along with a number of other Wildlife Trusts, successfully imported our own badger vaccine from an alternate supplier due to a shortage in the UK. We continued our vaccination work in West Berkshire as well as on selected reserves in Oxfordshire. We are pleased to have recently secured funding from DEFRA to continue and expand our vaccination scheme in West Berkshire over the next 4 years.

Water vole group surveys

We have two water vole group survey events planned for the start of the survey season, these are a great opportunity to refresh your field survey skills. Each event should be finished by 12.30pm. Please get in touch to sign up to take part.

Tuesday 3rd April: Meet 10.30am at the Beansheaf Centre, Linear Park, Calcot, Berkshire
Help us survey the reeded balancing ponds to monitor this small and vulnerable water vole population

Saturday 7th April: Meet 09.30am west Abingdon, Oxfordshire

Help us survey the lower River Ock, check a mink raft and look out for signs of otters too